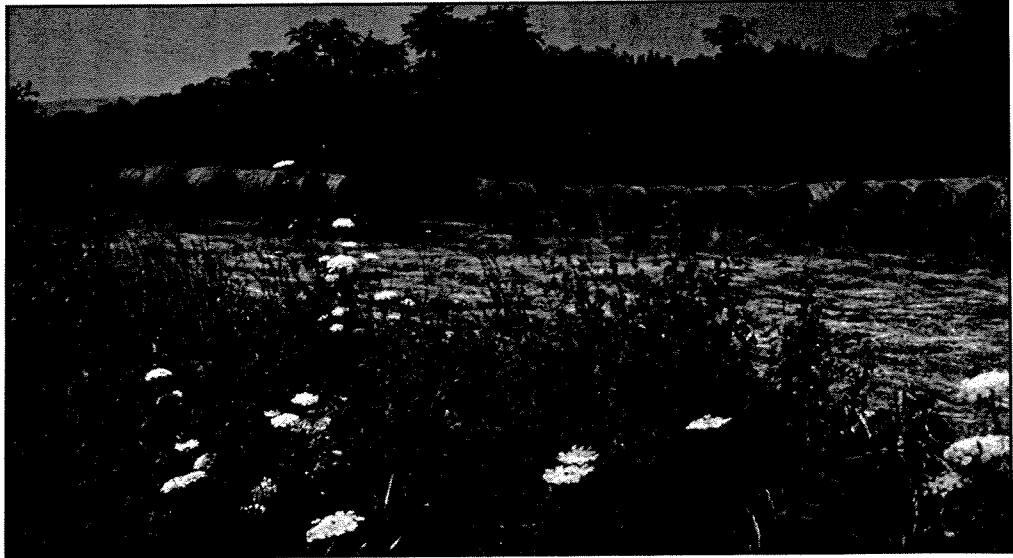

CHAPTER 3

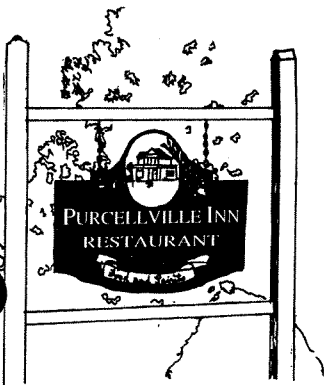
Natural & Cultural Resources



The natural environment is a fundamental influence on land use. Generally, areas that are unsuitable for development such as steep slopes, wetlands, floodplains and soils that will not percolate are obvious. Conflicts begin to occur, however, when development threatens the integrity of important environmental features or when technological improvements can be employed to overcome environmental constraints. In addition to natural features that make the Purcellville area unique, historic structures and the Town itself are evidence of the area's importance as a major center for trading in western Loudoun. This plan will be valuable in striking a balance between the pressures and impacts of development and the preservation of important natural and culture resources. The planning area has a wealth of natural and cultural resources that shape the character and identity of the community. The *Purcellville Urban Growth Area Management Plan* includes policies designed to encourage the wise use and conservation of these resources.

A. Environmental Resources

Natural resources and scenery were listed as positive attributes of the planning area by citizens who participated in the Purcellville public workshops. Existing policies in the County's *General Plan* outline the County's overall strategy for natural resource management; the PUGAMP seeks to enhance these policies by recommending the adoption of ordinances that protect key resources in the UGA.



Water resources, more specifically floodplains and groundwater resources, will be among the features most affected by development in the planning area. There are approximately 100 acres of vacant land in major floodplain (draining 640 acres or more) and approximately 115 acres of minor floodplain (draining less than 640 acres) in the Purcellville Urban Growth Area (see Figure 2, p. 13). Existing County policy designates floodplain areas as environmentally critical since construction in the floodplain can increase risks of property damage and reduce the floodplain's natural storage capacity. As new development occurs in the UGA, efforts will be made to ensure that floodplains and stormwater management facilities can accommodate additional water runoff from increased impervious surface area (driveways, roads, parking lots, etc.).

Groundwater supplied through wells and springs owned by the Town is an important source of drinking water in the Purcellville area. In addition, residents currently living in the Purcellville UGA depend on individual wells as their source of drinking water. Water supply was specifically mentioned as a concern by citizens at public workshops held in Purcellville. The County and Town must take precautions to protect groundwater as a fragile resource since area residents depend on groundwater as their water source.

Finally, the plan addresses steep slopes in the Purcellville UGA by recommending application of the County's steep slopes performance standards. There are approximately 60 acres of steep (15% or greater) slopes in the area located mainly along streams such as Jack's Run, a tributary of Goose Creek, Crooked Run and Catoctin Creek (See Figure 3, p. 14). In most cases these steep slopes are within or adjacent to floodplain areas and are highly erodible. Steep slopes need to be maintained in order to avoid erosion, downstream flooding, structural damage to roads and buildings and environmental pollution.

Environmental Resources Policies

1. The Town and the County support the continued application of relevant ***General Plan*** natural and cultural resource policies to protect key environmental resources in the Purcellville UGA.
2. The Town will amend the Town's Zoning Ordinance to include the following County environmental districts/regulations: Floodplain Overlay Zone, Creek Valley Buffer regulations and Performance Standards for Steep Slopes. These ordinances will be administered uniformly by the Town and the County and will apply both in the UGA and the Town.
3. The Town and County will promote policies that recognize the importance of wildlife as an important natural resource asset in the Urban Growth Area and will promote wildlife resource protection through open space policies.

Purcellville Urban Growth Area Management Plan

Major and Minor Floodplains

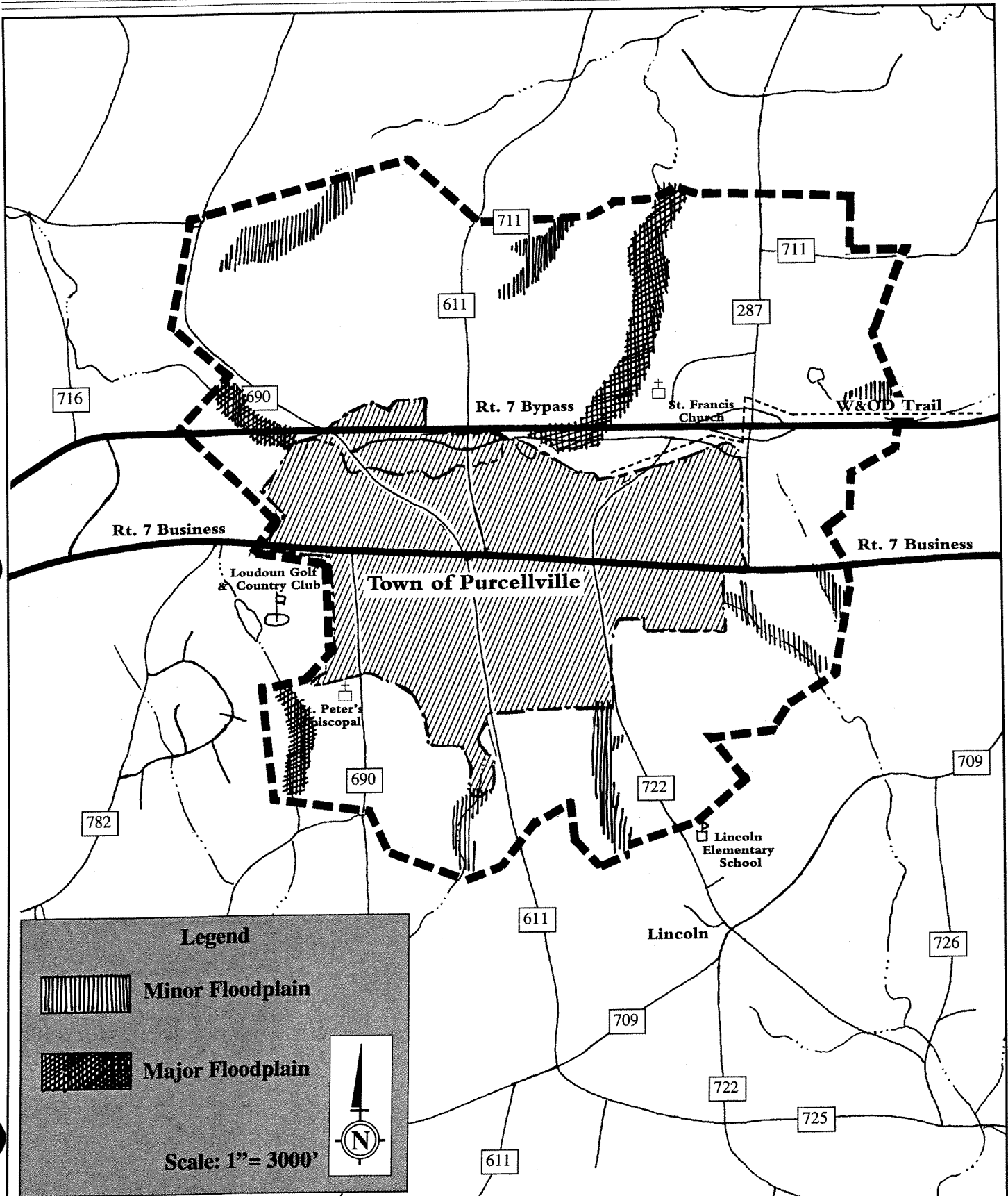


Figure 2.

Purcellville Urban Growth Area Management Plan

Steep Slopes

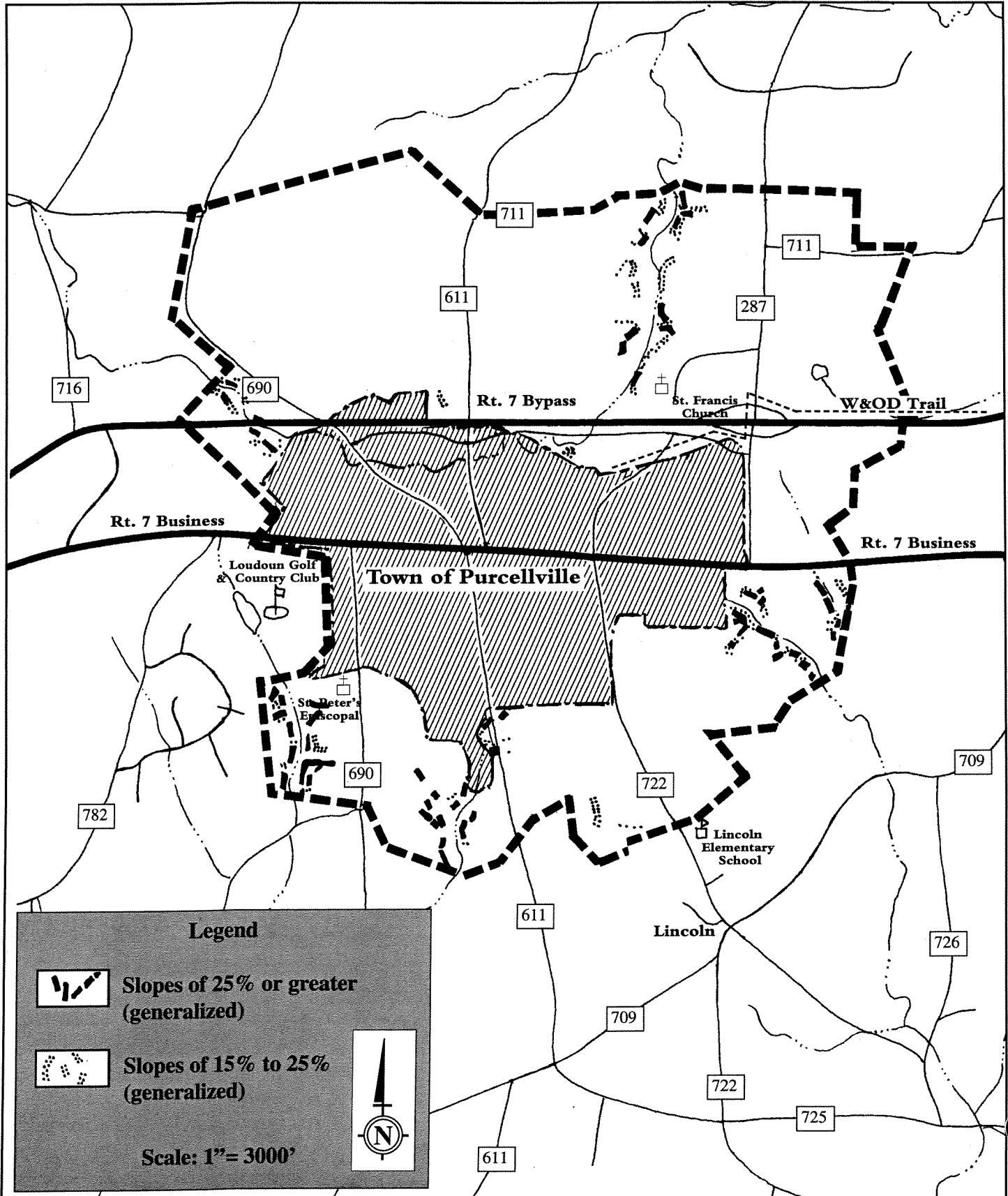


Figure 3.

B. Historic Resources

Purcellville's rich history as an agricultural community dating from the late 18th century is apparent in several historic structures remaining in the Purcellville UGA. Eleven properties in the Purcellville UGA have been researched by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR) (see Table 1, p. 16 and Figure 4, p. 17). All but one of these structures remains. The structure identified by survey form #53-327 was demolished during construction of the Route 7 Bypass. The majority of the structures surveyed by the VDHR were built or begun in the late 18th century, the period when the area was first settled and farmed extensively. In that century the primary settlement in this part of western Loudoun was by Quakers from Pennsylvania and their influence on the architecture of the area is evident.

In the mid 19th century the advent of the Alexandria, Loudoun and Hampshire Railroad (later the Washington and Old Dominion Railroad and now the W&OD Linear Park) was a substantial influence on the growth of the Town of Purcellville. A second railroad was planned, the Manassas Gap Railroad, which was intended to go from Alexandria to Harpers Ferry, West Virginia (then part of Virginia). The Manassas Gap Railroad was never completed nor was any track laid. However, it was graded for a large part of its length and there are remains of it in the planning area. There are also VDHR survey forms on these two railroads. These survey forms may be seen in the Loudoun County Department of Planning.



The Bernard Taylor House is an 18th century Quaker farmhouse located in the Purcellville UGA.

Table 1

Sites and Structures Surveyed Virginia Department of Historic Resources

- 53-182 Bernard Taylor House (now known as Weathering Heights): Built in late 18th century by one of the prominent Quaker families of the area. The floor plan with corner fireplaces is unusual for Loudoun County.
- 53-259 W&OD Trail: Originally Alexandria, Loudoun and Hampshire Railroad, chartered in 1852 and construction begun in 1855. First train to Leesburg from Alexandria in 1860 and the line reached Hamilton by 1861. By 1873 it had reached Purcellville. Extended from Purcellville to Bluemont in 1900.
- 53-276 Proposed Manassas Gap Railroad: Begun in the 1850s to go to Harpers Ferry from Alexandria. Some grading completed but no track laid before the Civil War broke out and work stopped. Some of the graded right-of-way can be seen southeast of Purcellville.
- 53-304 William Nichols House (Sunnyside Farm): Late 18th century fieldstone house with several significant out buildings. This property is listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places.
- 53-327 Early 19th century stone house demolished for the Route 7 Bypass.
- 53-422 Rich Bottom: Stone house built in late 18th century with later additions by the Purcell family for whom the Town of Purcellville was named.
- 53-468 Amos Goodin House: Stone house built 1810; unusual floor plan.
- 53-513 William Piggott House: Late 18th century stone house with later stone and frame additions. Property includes stone barn and spring house.
- 53-806 Spring Crossing: Single story log house dating to circa 1810. Extensively restored in 1987.
- 53-906 Earl Franz House: Originally a one story log house with frame second floor addition and late 19th century frame addition.
- 53-926 William Beans House: Well preserved late 18th century, two story stone farmhouse. Nearly all of the interior woodwork is original or dates to late 18th century.

Purcellville Urban Growth Area Management Plan

Historic Sites

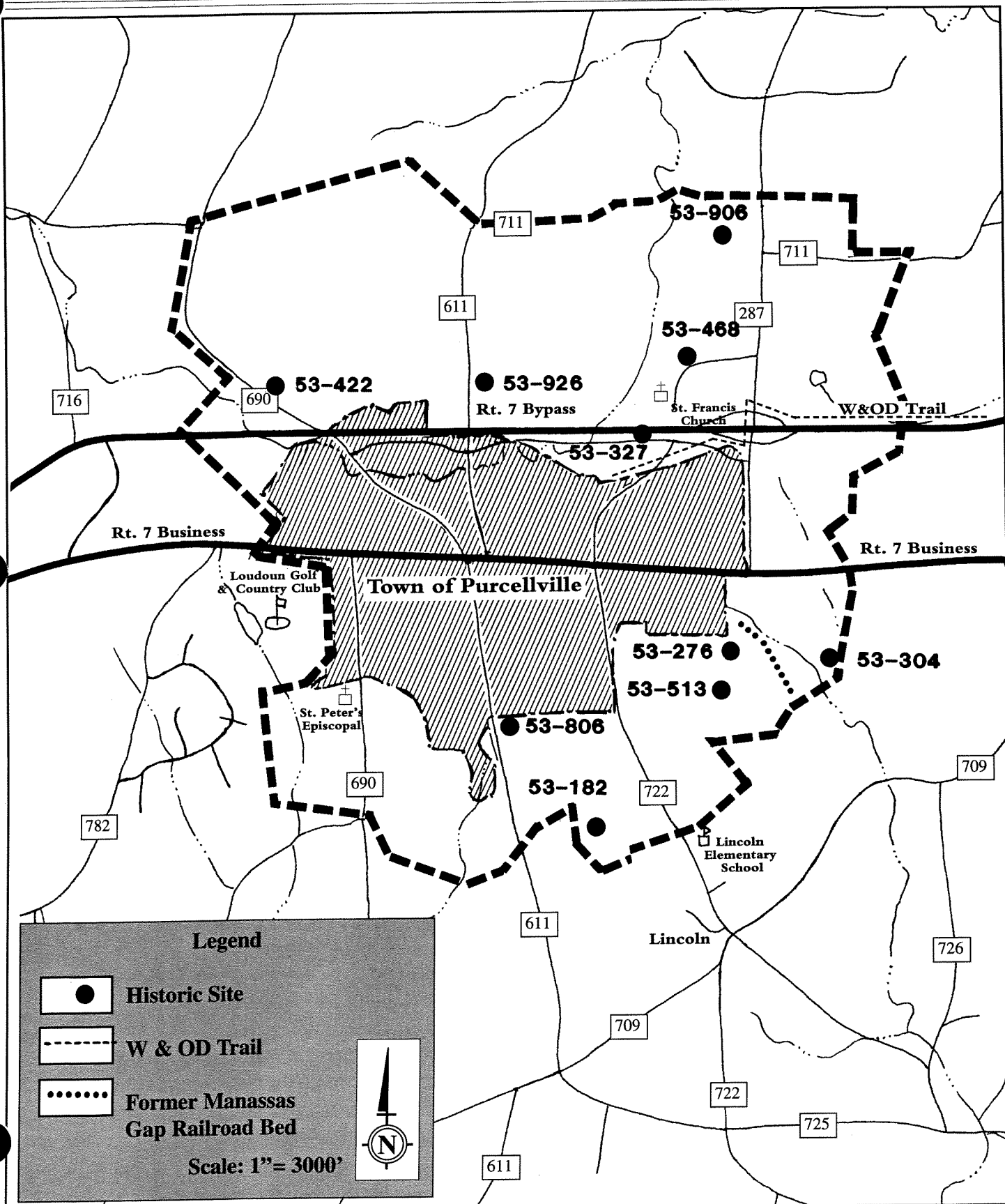


Figure 4.

A number of citizens who participated in the Purcellville public workshops expressed the desire to retain historic structures and scenery as development occurs in the UGA. The following policies were developed to encourage landowners in the area to voluntarily participate in efforts to maintain and preserve historic structures in the UGA.

Historic Resources Policies

1. The Town and the County will encourage owners of historic properties in the UGA to voluntarily apply for rezoning as a Town or County Historic Site District. The Town will adopt the County's Historic Site District for application in the Urban Growth Area.
2. The County and Town will encourage protection of rural historic structures in the UGA in the context of their natural settings. Areas with particular views and/or historic amenities should be encouraged to be conserved as part of new development.
3. The County and Town will encourage the adaptive re-use of historic structures in the UGA.
4. The historic significance of structures shall be evaluated as part of the design phase of publicly or privately funded road improvements in the UGA. Where possible, demolition of such structures for road improvements shall be avoided.

C. Open Space Resources

There are a variety of open space resources in the Purcellville UGA that are important features adding to the unique character and landscape of the area. In the short term, there is likely to be substantial open space in the Purcellville UGA. However, as properties develop and as farmland is converted to urban/suburban uses, open space resources in the planning area will diminish without specific policy guidance.

The open space policies of this plan are directed at preserving existing open space features, such as undeveloped stream valleys along Catoctin Creek and Goose Creek, as integral features of new communities. The policies emphasize clustered development to preserve environmentally sensitive areas and to help maintain a distinct sense of separation and community identity. The plan offers a variety of open space preservation options to maintain design flexibility and ensure that open space will be a permanent and integral feature of the planning area.

Open Space Resources Policies

1. Preservation of open space in the UGA will be accomplished through a variety of mechanisms including voluntary on-site and off-site density transfers, encouraging cluster development patterns in environmentally sensitive areas and at the edges of the UGA and by administering the open space regulations of the applicable Zoning Ordinance.
2. Open space preservation priorities in the UGA include preserving and protecting environmentally sensitive areas, unique natural resources such as Catocin Creek, and the tributaries to Goose Creek, and establishing a greenbelt to maintain a distinct sense of separation and identity for the Town of Purcellville and its UGA. Open space will also be an integral part of new developments in the UGA.
3. Open space will be included as a feature of all new residential and non-residential development in the UGA. Therefore, all development proposals will be reviewed for compliance with open space requirements outlined in the applicable Zoning Ordinance, and the design guidelines (p. 32) and open space proffer guidelines (p. 59) of this plan.
4. Where feasible, proposals for new development should seek to meet open space requirements and/or open space proffers by maintaining existing natural areas such as stream valleys, woodlots, hedgerows and other natural features. To the extent possible, these features should be incorporated into the design of new communities as parks, greens, natural areas, trails, wildlife areas, a greenbelt or for other open space purposes.
5. The County and Town should support the planned extension of the W&OD trail from Purcellville to Bluemont by seeking dedications for additions to the trail as properties in the UGA are rezoned or subdivided. The County and Town should seek to preserve the historic Manassas Gap Railroad Right of Way as a linear park in the UGA. Both of these facilities should serve as part of an integrated pedestrian pathway network in the UGA.

D. Greenbelt/Community Buffers

Of particular concern in the Purcellville area is the issue of maintaining a sense of visual separation or community identity between Purcellville and its neighboring communities of Round Hill, Hamilton and Lincoln. This issue is most challenging in the eastern portion of the UGA

where Hamilton's and Purcellville's UGA boundaries are adjacent. It is equally critical in the southern portion of the UGA where the UGA boundary is very near the historic Village of Lincoln. The plan includes specific policies to encourage clustering at the edge of the UGA and to establish a "greenbelt" or open area in key locations.

1. The Town and County will seek to establish a greenbelt of open space to separate development in the UGA from other town UGAs or developed areas surrounding Purcellville. The purpose of the greenbelt is to maintain the character of the Purcellville area and to retain a distinct sense of identity and visual separation from Round Hill, Hamilton and Lincoln. Although a landowner may be encouraged to cluster density in certain areas, the greenbelt policies are not intended to reduce development density on parcels located in greenbelt areas.
2. The Town and the County will seek to implement the greenbelt as development occurs in the UGA through the rezoning process by encouraging landowners to transfer or cluster development density away from greenbelt areas, maintain the greenbelt for passive recreational use, permanent open space, farmland or parkland and/or plan the area for low density residential development not to exceed one unit per three acres except where existing zoning in place at the time of adoption of this plan would permit denser development.
3. The greenbelt will be located at the periphery of the UGA, just inside or adjacent to the UGA boundary. In the eastern portion of the UGA, a greenbelt area should be designated in both the Hamilton and Purcellville UGAs (See also policy #4, below).
4. The greenbelt will be determined on a case by case basis based on topography and other physical features that provide adequate visual separation between urban and rural areas or between developed areas. The greenbelt is not generally intended to be any specific width or size, except in two specific areas identified on Figure 5, p. 21. A greenbelt of approximately 300' (measured from the edge of the UGA) in length and 600' in width (measured from the centerline of Route 722) should be established along each side of Route 722, near the Village of Lincoln. Landowners in this area will be encouraged to cluster development away from the greenbelt and to maintain the area in common open space. The greenbelt area adjacent to the Town of Hamilton shall coincide with the existing minor floodplain/stream valley that is a tributary of Crooked Run as located at the time of adoption of this plan. Rezoning to higher densities may be permitted east of the floodplain/stream valley as long as structures are set back a minimum of 300' from Business Route 7 (measured

Purcellville Urban Growth Area Management Plan Greenbelt Map

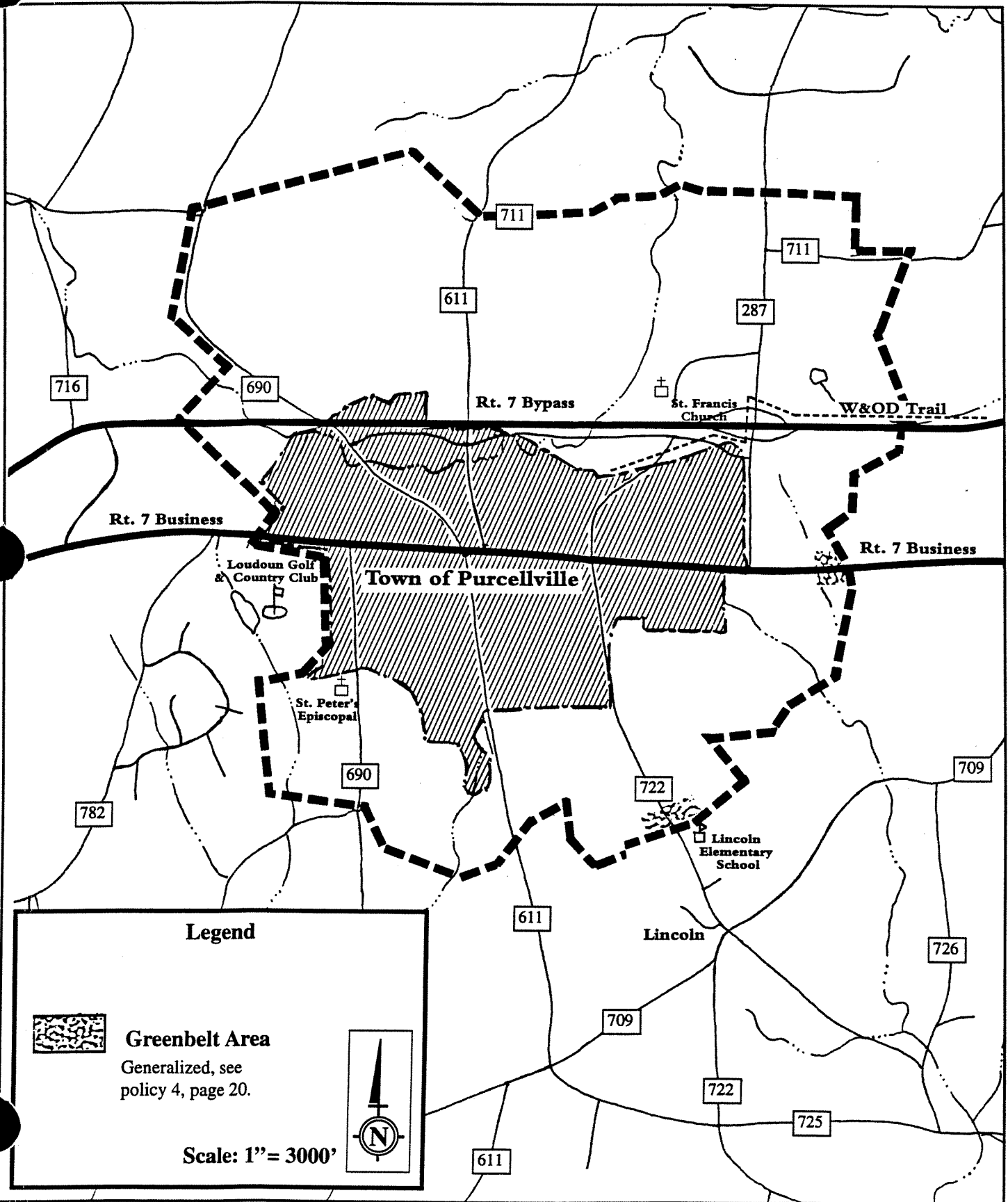
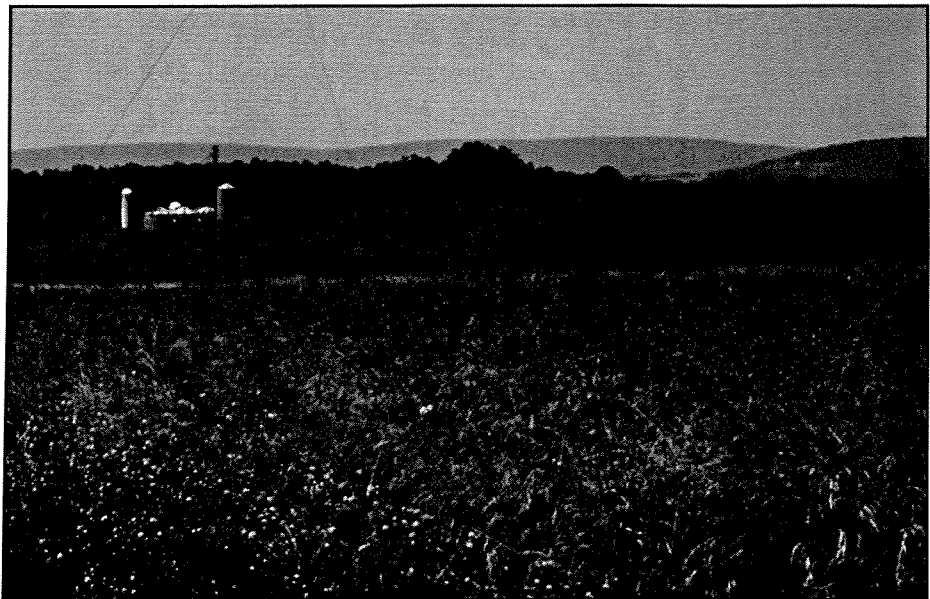


Figure 5.

from the ultimate Right of Way of Business Rt. 7). Densities from land within the two designated greenbelt areas may be relocated to other portions of the affected properties.

5. Implementation of the greenbelt policy on a site specific basis will take into consideration the following criteria:
 - a. Preservation of significant natural features such as woodlands, hilltops, steep slopes and stream valleys;
 - b. Preservation of significant historic features including structures, fences and walls, field boundaries and scenic roads;
 - c. Preservation of scenic vistas and views, especially from scenic byways, existing and proposed roads.
6. Rural hamlets will be the preferred subdivision option for properties developing under existing A-3 or CR-1 zoning at the periphery of the UGA.
7. Preservation of on-site open space to establish a greenbelt will be the preferred method of fulfilling open space proffer guidelines outlined on p. 59 when the property under consideration for rezoning is located at the periphery of the UGA.



Scenic vistas such as this one are treasured by residents of the Purcellville area.

